

find these speeches or ask whether there are other records—for example, transcripts, tape or video recordings, press accounts, and so on—that would indicate whether her April 28 speech is indicative of her approach to judging.

As we begin to consider the nomination of Judge Sotomayor, we will need this information to properly evaluate her qualifications, especially as it relates to her view that using foreign or international law is an appropriate way for U.S. Supreme Court Justices to interpret the U.S. Constitution.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I ask unanimous consent to speak for 15 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BURMESE PYTHONS

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, tragedy has struck. It is not like we haven't been warned. With the proliferation of the Burmese python being brought into the United States, these pythons people buy as pets, and then they get so big that the people don't want them around the house anymore and they release them. Of course, in south Florida they are releasing them into a natural habitat which is the Florida Everglades, so much so that the superintendent of the Everglades National Park has now estimated that they have proliferated to the tune of 150,000 to 180,000 of these Burmese pythons.

When Secretary Salazar came down a month ago for us to take him into the Everglades so he could see that extraordinary feature of Mother Nature, the river of grass, we took him in an airboat out across this river of grass. We also wanted to show him what is lurking beneath that grass now. We took him to two captured Burmese pythons. One was about an 8 footer and another one was a 16 footer. A 16-foot Burmese python in his midsection is that much in diameter. It took three grown men to hold that python. The oldest registered Burmese python in captivity has grown to 27 feet. Indeed, an 18 footer was captured and killed in the Everglades, and it was a female. They found inside of her 56 eggs that were ready to hatch. That is why we have a proliferation.

We have spent a lot of money, along with the State of Florida, to restore the Everglades, one of the great natural wonders of the world. Mankind, over the course of three quarters of a century, has diked and drained the Everglades, and we are trying to restore them now. But here we have an invasive species that has been introduced that is upsetting the entire ecological balance. Already we have found, for example, somehow a Burmese python swam across the ocean to Key Largo in the upper Florida Keys. They found inside this Burmese python the endangered Key Largo wood rat. They

have found a full size bobcat. They have found a full size deer. Indeed, the Burmese python is at the top of the food chain. These pythons, in fact, get into fights with alligators, and they found inside one of the Burmese pythons a 6-foot alligator.

I want to show what I am talking about. I want colleagues to see this critter. This is only a 6 footer. This Burmese python is 2 feet shorter than the Burmese python 4 days ago that, after it had escaped from its glass container at midnight, the man of the house found missing. He went and got the Burmese python, put it back in the container and, unfortunately, did not secure the top of the container, put, if we can believe it, a quilt over the top and secured down the edges of the quilt. Guess what an 8-foot Burmese python can do coming out of a glass container? Tragedy struck, because that python slithered throughout the house and up into a baby crib where there was a 2-year-old little girl named Shaiunna Hare. That Burmese python attached its fangs to the forehead of that child and then did what they do, wrapped its body around the body of the little child and proceeded with all of that muscle to strangle the child to death. This is what we have been saying was going to happen. This happened with a domestic pet in a home. This is what is capable of happening with 180,000 of these pythons in the Florida National Everglades Park.

Sooner or later, a Burmese python will get the endangered Florida panther. Sooner or later, for an unsuspecting tourist in the Everglades National Park, there will be an encounter with a human. Tragically, it took this event of the strangulation by one of these snakes of a child within her own home in the child's crib to bring this to our attention.

This Wednesday there will be a hearing in the committee chaired by Senator BOXER. I will be testifying. I will bring further evidence than these photographs. Here are wildlife officers encountering a snake with an attachment that grabs the snake from right behind the head. In this case, it is probably a 6½ footer—relatively small. But we can see the size. This is solid muscle. That is why these constrictor snakes have the capability of asphyxiating their prey before they then consume their prey. We have heard the old adage, a pig in a python. That is exactly what it is. Once they asphyxiate their prey, then their jaws are capable of totally opening and they ingest the entire victim into their body. There is the old phrase: a pig in a python with the hump. That is exactly what it is.

That is the alligator that was found, the 6-foot alligator, within the stomach of the snake. That is the same thing.

There is something we can do about this. No. 1, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has the capability under law now to declare this an injurious species. Since they have been studying

this for the last 2½ years and have still not acted, although I believe that Secretary of the Interior Salazar is getting them off dead center and is going to get them to start moving, there is something else we can do. We can change the law. We can stop the importation by changing this from being a species that is allowed to be imported into one that is injurious. That change of definition in the law would stop the importation of these snakes into this country and would stop the exporting of these snakes from one State across State lines to another.

The State of Florida has a registration fee. They now require the implantation of a chip so that if the snake gets loose, we will have a chance of chasing it down. Nevertheless, when we have 150,000 to 180,000 of these snakes in the Everglades National Park alone, we can see that the ecological balance of Mother Nature is definitely being upset. We must change it. We must do it quickly.

Therefore, in front of the Boxer committee will be the legislation I have offered with a number of other Senators, trying to put a halt to the things that led to this tragedy of this little girl being strangled to death by a Burmese python.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, over the past several weeks, Americans have heard a number of proposals for reforming health care, and they are increasingly concerned about many of the details. Americans want reform, but they want the right reform, not a reform that ends up costing them much more for worse care than they already receive. Unfortunately, the government-run plan that some are proposing would do just that.

A government-run plan would force millions of Americans to give up the care they currently have and replace it with a system in which care is denied, delayed, and rationed. Instead of increasing access and quality, it could limit access and options. It could lead us into deeper debt. And millions could well remain uninsured.

Americans are skeptical about all of this. They do not want to be forced to